

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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DIME NOVEL SKETCHES #31

BEADLES FRONTIER SERIES

Originally published weekly between Feb. 5, 1908 and Jan. 14, 1910 by M. J. Ivers & Co. 100 issues, colored pictorial cover, size $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$, 100 pages. Some issues slightly larger in size. Mainly reprints of Munro's Ten Cent Novels. In 1912 the Arthur Westbrook Co. reprinted the whole series. For complete information on this series see Bibliographic Listing No. 4 issued by the publisher.

The Merriwells — After Tip Top

By J. Edward Leithead and Gerald J. McIntosh

For we oldtime admirers of the Merriwells, Frank and Dick, who watched their growth weekly in the pages of the original Tip Top, anything out of character in either of them (or errors concerning their associates and enemies, as well known as the brothers themselves, or a disagreement in some detail of past adventures) would, naturally, be spotted by that once devoted army of readers. It must have been a lifelong satisfaction to Gilbert Patten that two such brain-children could command so much enthusiastic attention and even emulation.

Patten created Frank and Dick and a host of others, good, bad and medium to spice the yarns and give them a genuine humanness seldom attained in print, carried them magnificently thru 850 novels (or did he quit writing them with No. 823). Oh, yes, he pulled a few minor boners, wellknown to most of you, but he was doing a terrific job, keeping this saga (20,000 words per week) on the go for so many years. Journalism lost a sterling sports writer when Patten turned his talent for describing any kind of a game, but especially baseball and football, to the pages of Tip Top.

Although Frank was, of course, the more popular of the brothers, I can't say that I had much fault to find with

Dick. While Chester Arlington's villainies, as J. P. Guinon pointed out in his very able article, "The Admirable Arlington" (Dime Novel Roundup, Jan. and Feb. 1938), helped stop the stampede of readers away from Tip Top after a year of Dick Merriwell, I would probably have kept on reading about Dick, and liking him, if Chester had never showed up.

Patten ably recorded the romance of Frank and Inza, their marriage taking place in Tip Top #481, Frank Merriwell's Great Day, or, The Crowning Achievement of His Career." In #530, Frank Merriwell's Son, or, The Mark of the Star," Frank Merriwell, Jr., was born. How would Patten have handled the growing Frank, Jr., who appeared in New Tip Top Weekly? Would young Frank have been able to attain the popularity of his father and keep New Tip Top running for years, as the old Tip Top had with Patten as author? You answer that one, boys.

Who were the writers entrusted with the career of young Frank Merriwell? John H. Whitson was one. He'd written Tip Tops back in 1900, Nos. 198 to 248, while Patten was working on "Rockspur" stories. William Wallace Cook and William Almon Wolff were two more, and there was still another not often mentioned. J. P. Guinon (a Mer-

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riwell expert) and I agreed long ago that St. George Rathborne also wrote for New Tip Top; the evidence is there, in style and phrase that belonged to Rathborne. Let me quote from a letter of Guinon's:

"I was particularly interested in your James Boys story in the April issue of Roundup, because of the reference therein to St. George Rathborne. I have for a long time believed him to be the author of many of the Merriwell stories appearing in Tip Top after Patten quit writing them in 1912, and some of the things you mention in your article make me practically certain of it. For instance, in the account of Jesse shooting at the feet of Roaring Bill in the saloon, the harassed gentleman began 'swearing like a certain army in Flanders'. The author of the Merriwell stories that appeared in New Tip Top in 1914 made almost identical references to the army in Flanders in at least two different tales, and in each case the character making like the famous army was, even as Roaring Bill, engaged in a fight at the time of his imitation.

"There is no doubt in my mind that Rathborne edited Tip Top for a long time in his latter years when his output as an author was slowing up. In Tip Top No. 675, dated March 20, 1909 the editor, in replying to a reader's letter in the Applause Column, stated he was the author of 'many stories of canoeing and adventure in the Eagle and Medal Libraries.' Rathborne is listed as the author of many stories in the earlier Medals; for instance, No. 40, Canoe and Campfire; No. 207, Shifting Winds, or, The Cruise of the Coast Canoes; No. 220, The Gulf Cruisers; No. 231, Paddling Under Palmettos, and No. 242, The Rival Canoe Boys. Then, in your article, there is a reference to Earl Rossiter, a character in the Rough Rider Weekly. Now, at the end of each Tip Top story there would appear a short synopsis of the one to appear the following week, and in Tip Top No. 413, the person, doubtless the editor, preparing the synopsis for the next tale, became all mixed up and used the name of Earl Rossiter therein instead of that of Chester Arlington, one

of the Tip Top stalwarts. Also, in the later Tip Tops appeared references to Old Broadbrim, the detective about whom much was written by Rathborne."

Although John H. Whitson had written the Jack Lightfoot stories (All-Sports Library), mostly about athletics, he was not, to my mind, as good a sports story writer as Patten. He was better at Western stuff. So were William Wallace Cook and St. George Rathborne. About William Almon Wolff's writings I know very little, so I can't say how he compared with Patten. But Gil in his own line, I bet you, was the champ!

Conceivably, he was not too pleased with what three Western and detective story writers had done with the son of Frank and Inza Merriwell (he'd written, though not specialized in, Westerns himself years before), for when he "took up the 'Merry' pen again" in April 1927, he dropped all of young Frank's friends and adventures in New Tip Top as if they'd never been or happened (and that included Frank's nickname of "Chip"). Patten's setup for him was an entire change, as you will see in due time. It gives you some insight as to what might have been expected of Patten as author of the New Tip Top series. In all likelihood it wouldn't have been necessary to push Owen Clancy into the limelight and abandon the Merriwells in an attempt to keep the weekly off the rocks. It struck and went down, anyway. Eighteen Owen Clancy stories couldn't save it (not that we've got a thing against Clancy, who was a good guy); these stories were reprinted in New Medal Library. G. J. McIntosh says the 18 tales should be disregarded by collectors of Merriwelliana as they are non-Merriwell.

New Tip Top ended March 6, 1915, with No. 136, but the Merriwell saga went on for another year, the stories being published in Tip Top Semi-Monthly. The first, dated March 10, 1915, was Dick Merriwell's Likeness, or, The Bribe That Failed. This is a 40 page novelette. The locale, Tucson, Arizona, and the nearby Santa Catalina Mountains. Dick is on business for the Mer-

riwell Company, has been followed, without his knowing it, by Old Joe Crowfoot. A crooked mining deal is being put over on an old sailor by a Tucson gang, Dick's "likeness" being a "double" who makes a false report of the mine's worth while Dick is held a prisoner in the mine tunnel. Old Joe Crowfoot, happily, knows a secret entrance, releases Dick. But the old sailor has bought the mine meantime. There's a surprise ending: while in the mine Dick discovered a vein of gold, of which the mining crooks were not aware, so the sailor really had bought himself a gold mine. Dick meets June Arlington in Tucson and is delighted (who wouldn't be, meeting June!).

Old Tip Top characters: Dick Merriwell, June Arlington and Old Joe Crowfoot.

Seven new characters (including a parrot, "Samantha") who are too many to list and won't be heard of again. I think it was Ralph Smith who once said he had kept a record of all the characters in the old Tip Top, adding to the list as new ones came along. Ralph could have a field day adding the names of the new characters from these magazine stories. But in the old Tip Top, of course, the characters were more like friends and acquaintances who would turn up again, perhaps frequently. That made quite a difference. Except for a very few, these new people were like all but the principal characters in *Work and Win*, here this week and gone the next, forever. We'll become acquainted with the carry-overs, now and then, from story to story in the magazine "Merriwells" as we go along.

The second Merriwell story in Tip Top Semi-Monthly, dated Mar. 25, 1915, was a follow-up novelette of 39 pages of Dick still in Tucson, with June Arlington and Old Joe Crowfoot. Dick's double, in the preceding story, causes complications in baseball. Gamblers try to clean up on the game by working on the crooked manager of the ball team Merriwell is slated to pitch for. Only, Dick is kidnapped . . . and so is June. But they slip their bonds, return to town as the ninth inning is being play-

ed. You know what a Merriwell could do in a pinch, and Dick's strategy in saving the game really makes quite a tense windup for a ball game situation that has been done many times. Title of the story, Dick Merriwell's Long-shot Chance.

The third Merriwell story in Tip Top Semi-Monthly was a novelette of 35 pages, dated April 10, 1915, entitled Frank Merriwell at Great Salt Lake. This story takes up with Frank, Senior, himself. The locale is at and around Great Salt Lake, Utah. Lost treasure starts strife and trouble for Merry and his friends while on business for the Merriwell Company. Harold Arch and his sister, Mrs. Deming (she is wanted for the murder of her husband in Salt Lake City) are characters from New Tip Top. For Frank's earlier adventures with them in Yellowstone Park see New Tip Top Nos. 128, 129 and 130. Does this give us a clue to the author of these stories? Notice that these Tip Top Semi-Monthly yarns so far, all have a Western background—and the first Merriwell serial which I shall summarize next is laid partly in Texas, partly in Old Mexico. Add to that the fact that some of the characters hark back to the discontinued weekly to which all three authors contributed and it all suggests that one of our three "Western" writers, Whitson, Cook or Rathborne has been carrying on in the semi-monthly.

Old Tip Top characters in this Great Salt Lake story: Merry, Barney Mulloy, Jack Diamond; besides Doc Fisher, Harold Arch and his sister, Mrs. Deming, characters in New Tip Top.

We now come to the first Merriwell serial in Tip Top Semi-Monthly, in 4 parts, the first instalment of 23 pages in issue dated April 25, 1915. It's called Dick Merriwell's Baseball Gringos. The locale is El Paso, Texas, and Santander and El Torreon, Old Mexico.

The action takes place in Old Mexico at the time of the many Mexican Revolutions, and frequent mention is made of Pancho Villa, as well as Gen. Carranza and other well-known Mexican leaders. Dick Merriwell goes down into Old Mexico to make a tour with a base-

ball team, presumably to play Mexican nines with the object of creating better relations between the two countries but actually, also, to try and help Americans in trouble south of the Border, because of the fighting going on. Dick is met at El Paso by a Government Secret Service man, who gives him instructions what to do. Dick hears that Chester Arlington and his sister June, Dick's promised wife, are missing in Old Mexico. That starts things, head-on. A highlight is the attendance of Dick and Brad Buckhart, at a bullfight, against their wishes. They believe they see Chester and June in the audience and try to contact them. Some of the seats collapse into the arena, the bull charges the fallen and confused spectators. Dick kills the enraged bull and rescues June, as he thinks, but the girl turns out to be the daughter of one of Villa's generals. Chester disappears and they can't find June, either. The start of the first ball game is given in charge of Brad, and Dick goes hunting for June, having had a note from her that she has been carried away. The game goes on with a crooked umpire against Dick's "Gringo" team. He goes to a nearby town after June and is captured by Revolutionists, but escapes.

The second instalment, in the issue of May 10, 1915, 25 pages: The locale is in and around the town of Santander. The baseball game in progress and unfinished in the previous instalment, is completed and won by Dick's team of "Gringos," led by Brad Buckhart. The Mexican team goes to pieces when firing begins near town. The firing is at Dick as he comes into town pursued by counter-Revolutionists, as he was close by searching for June Arlington.

Dick comes into possession of important papers meant for an American gun-runner with the Revolutionists. This man, it develops, is an old Yale enemy of Dick Merriwell. He and the bull-fighter of the past instalment (who hates Dick for having killed the bull and saving Mercedes, Gen. Bonilla's daugh-

ter, because he's smitten with her), join in a plot to carry off June. That was the reason for her and Chester's sudden disappearance. A second ball game is played with a Mexican team and won by Dick's "Gringos," but Dick himself is after June's captors. He finds Chester, and he and Brad, with Old Joe Crowfoot, take up the chase.

(to be continued)

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.

Just received word from Lou Kohrt that Fred Beverly was severely burned when his house burned down. He died from the burns during the week of January 7.

Rev. Samuel C. Spaulding, last known surviving author of Nick Carters, died Feb. 8, 1962, at a nursing home at Monterey, Mass. He was 83 years of age. He was born in Leavenworth, Kansas, Sept. 18, 1878. He was the subject of an article by J. Edward Leithead published in the November and December 1961, issues of the Round-up.

Gerald McIntosh writes in that "True West" for April has an interesting article on Ned Buntline titled "The West's First Press Agent." No. 192 of Diamond Dick Library is used as an illustration.

Bert Couch reports that the W. Foulsham & Co. Ltd. of London is issuing newly edited editions of stories by G. A. Henty. Already published are "In the Irish Brigade," "The Lion of the North" and others. These books have dust covers with a brilliantly colored illustration fitting to the battling stories. A colored frontispiece adorns each copy.

Ross R. Devean has just returned from a 14,000 mile, eight month tour of Europe.

John F. MacDonald, Steve ? and John Page were out here Aug. 28th. We did some trading, and what not for old times sake.

Walter A. Higgins says he had nev-

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

223. Frank E. Fuller, 351 Thayer St., Providence 6, R. I. (New Member)

206. George L. Setman III, 364 Milford Sq. Rd., Quakertown, Pa. (Correction)

er read any of John T. McIntyres books until he got the series of 4 of "The Young Continentals." He says John wrote some very fine boys books—John used to be a member of the H. H. Bro. way back in the '20s, and early '30s, and I've met and talked with him many a time, down in old Philadelphia.

Lou Kohrt has a lot of old Boys Nickel Novels to sell, as well as a lot of St. Nicholas magazines in the original bindings. They sure are very nice, and are worthy of anyone's collection.

I'm wondering how Lou made out with Carla, hope she stayed away from his place, for she was a bad one—with all the damage she did, down that a-way, hurricanes and tornados are good to keep away from.

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in **TIP TOP WEEKLY**

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of Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup Nos. 1 to 237 for sale.

Ralph F. Cummings

161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.

WANTED !

Fame & Fortune #118 to 125, one or all. Describe.

Seaside Library (flat size) #11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 381, 396, 407, 421, 423, 427, 434, 456, 516, 589, 669.

RALPH P. SMITH

Box 985

Lawrence, Mass.

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Having acquired a new lot of Liberty Boys of 76, I offer One unbroken run of numbers from 300 to 399, both inclusive.

Good to fine shape. Will sell as a lot or in blocks of ten. Highest bidder gets them. **NO TRADES.**

Artist who drew pictures on covers was at his best during this run. These will never be obtainable again.

A bid from a wealthy collector is already in, but I would rather they remained within the Happy Hours Brotherhood.

To give every bidder an even chance, no letters will be opened until Paul Revere Day (April 19, 1962).

In case of ties the highest bidders will be given another chance.

Checks from unsuccessful bidders will be promptly returned.

I reserve the right to reject any or all bids.

NOTE: These novels will all be invisibly marked with tiny identification so in case any are returned for money back if not satisfied:

DO NOT SUBSTITUTE with poorer copies. I once had this trick pulled on me but **NEVER AGAIN.**

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Add to the \$5.50 lot Beadles Frontier Series, Arm Chair Library, Deadwood Dick Library, and to both groups, Boys of N. Y., Golden Weekly, Young Men of America Story papers.

I have listed only a part of what I have in large or small quantities in the dime novel and story paper category. Inquiries answered if stamp is enclosed. I shall be away from June to Nov. 15, inc.

Want a dandy Chatterbox, 1882, for \$4.00? Or a bound volume of Golden Days for \$3.75? Or paper books for 35 cents in American Detective Series, Alger Series (not Alger Stories), Burt L. Standish Library, Eagle Series, Early Western Life Series, Merriwell Series, Medal Library, Magnet Library, Seaside Pocket Library, and Sport Stories? Postage is extra on the books at the low price offered.

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- Vol. 6. #287 to 312. (26 issues). Loose. \$9.00
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RALPH P. SMITH

Box 985

Lawrence, Mass.